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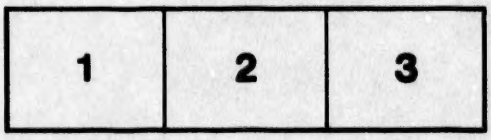
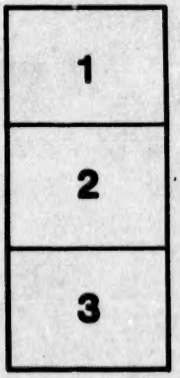
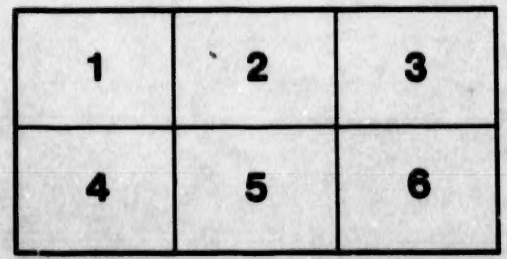






Protest by the Seceders in 1844.

PROTEST OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AND ELDERS

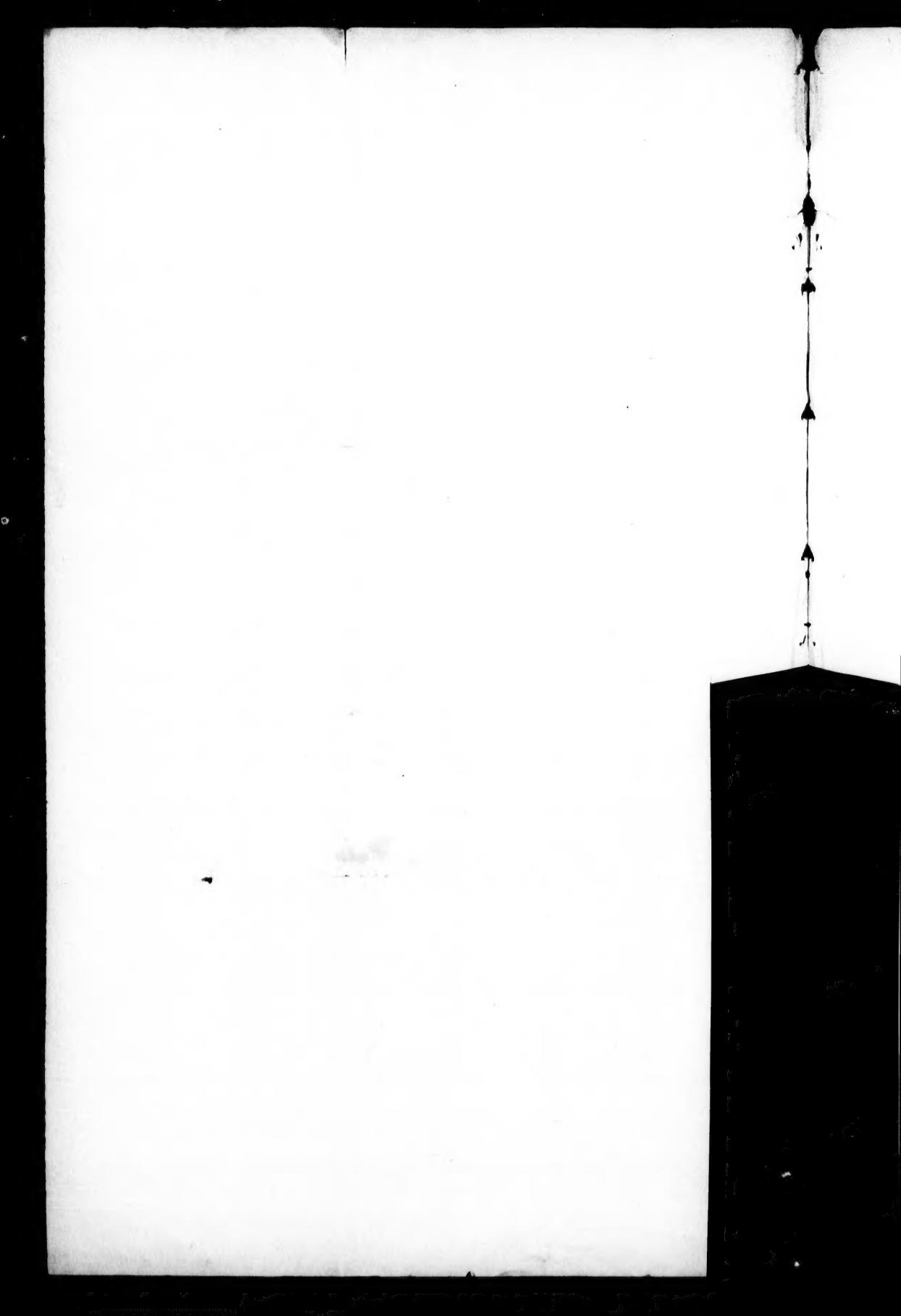
BELONGING TO THE

SYNOD OF CANADA,

In connection with the Church of Scotland, in July, 1844.

WHEREAS, the Church, as the divinely constituted depository and guardian of revealed truth, is specially bound to lift up her testimony for those particular truths which are at any time endangered or overborne by the antagonist powers of the world. And, whereas, those great and fundamental truths which respect the supremacy of Christ in His Church, the spiritual independence of her rulers, their exclusive responsibility to her Great Head, the rights and privileges of His people, and the proper relation which should subsist between the Church and the State, are at the present day endangered, and have actually been overborne in the Established Church of Scotland through recent encroachments of the State upon the spiritual province submitted to by her. And, whereas, in righteous testimony against these encroachments, great numbers of office bearers and members of the said Church have solemnly and deliberately come out from her, and are now formally constituted into the Free Protesting Church of Scotland—a Church which has, during the last twelve months, enjoyed many unequivocal tokens of the approbation of her Great Head. And, whereas, the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, apart from all *considerations of a general kind, which should have led them to testify against the defections and corruptions of the said established Church were* especially bound to do so, because of their connection with said Church, and because also, of reiterated testimonies solemnly and deliberately lifted up by the Synod in former years in behalf of the contendings of those who have been compelled to secede. And, whereas, *the due and proper testimony against the defections and corruptions of the said Established Church of Scotland was a termination of the peculiarly close and intimate connection in which the Synod stood to her.* And, whereas, it has been in an orderly and constitutional way, proposed to this Synod, having been made the subject of petitions and overtures of congregations and Presbyteries, whilst it has been advocated by many of the members, that the Synod should terminate its connection with said Church, and alter its designation accordingly. And, whereas, the Synod, by the vote of a majority of its members, came to the decision that it shall not terminate said connection, nor take other such action as was required.

Wherefore, we, the undersigned Ministers and Elders, members of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, do, in our own name, as well as in the name of all who adhere to us, hereby dissent and protest against said decision for the following reasons:—



First,—That in our conscientious conviction, this Synod are thereby giving their virtual sanction to the procedure of the Established Church of Scotland in the great questions at issue between the Church and the Free Protesting Church of Scotland, and *lending the weight of their influence, as a Church, to the support of principles which are incompatible with the purity and liberty of any Church by which they are allowed—and which are fitted at the same time to do grievous injury to the cause of the Redeemer throughout the world.*

Second,—That in a cause relating to a Church in which they have many and obvious reasons for feeling a very deep and special interest—a cause, too, in which the honour of Christ's crown and the interests of His kingdom are intimately concerned—they have refused to discharge the obvious duty of lifting up a full and unambiguous testimony for the truth, and thereby strengthen the hands of those who are witnessing for Christ and suffering for His sake.

Third,—That after solemnly pledging themselves, in various forms and at different times, to maintain the great principles for which the Free Protesting Church is now contending, and which the Church of Scotland has practically repudiated, and especially after the import and the security of such pledges had been brought into question by the actions of various ministers, and even of one of the inferior Church Courts, they have virtually receded from their solemn pledges, and destroyed the weight of every expression of their opinions in favour of the aforesaid principles embodied in their records.

Fourth.—That by *leaving an open door for the admission of Ministers and Elders from the Established Church of Scotland, holding unsound views on the great principles aforesaid*, they *have most seriously damaged the purity of the Church, and brought even her independence into peril, through the probable introduction of office-bearers, prepared to submit to the same encroachments of the civil power by which the Church of Scotland has been enslaved.*

Fifth.—That they have rendered the relation in which they stand towards the Established Church of Scotland so doubtful and equivocal, that even their declaration of spiritual independence is necessarily deprived of all significance and weight, that the terms on which their endowments are held, have been in effect declared to be such as are incompatible with the proper regulation of their intercourse with other Churches, and even with free action in many other matters of greater importance, and that moreover, they have cast away the opportunity of placing this Church on a basis which might have gathered around her all the sound-hearted Presbyterians in the Province.

Sixth.—That they have given additional weight to the practical arguments against establishments, furnished by the present position of the Established Church of Scotland—strengthened the hands of those who, in this Province are denying the lawfulness and expediency of all national endowments for religious purposes, and rejected the opportunity which God in His providence had afforded them of proving to the world that freedom of action and a jealous determination to guard against the encroachments of the civil power, were perfectly compatible with the enjoyment of the countenance and support of the State.

Seventh.—That in a matter in which the consciences of many of their brethren were aggrieved, and for refusing relief in regard to which no moral necessity could be pleaded on their part, such relief has nevertheless been refused.

Wherefore, for all these and other reasons which might be stated, we dissent from the decision to which this venerable court yesterday came, and while feeling painfully the solemnity of our position, and deeply distressed in the view of the possible results, we solemnly protest to this venerable court, before God, the Church of Christ and the world, that it is our conscientious belief that in *respect of the premises sin in matters fundamental has been done by this court*, and that while at the same time we continue to adhere to the Confession of Faith and other standards of this Church, *we can yet no longer, with a clear conscience, hold office in the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland.* And further, we protest that the guilt of schism lies not with us, but with those who have acted in a way which compels us to depart. And further, also, we protest, in behalf of ourselves and those of the people of this church, who may now or hereafter adhere to us, that we hold ourselves entitled to all the property and emoluments, of whatever kind, now in our possession.

285.1

1844, Presbyterian